

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 253712

TOSEC 23

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2 NO FOREIGN DISSEM

TAGS: PINT, GR

SUBJECT: GREEK ELECTION

1. FOLLOWING IS PRELIMINARY INR ASSESSMENT OF GREEK ELECTION.

2. WITH 98 PERCENT OF THE VOTES COUNTED, KARAMANLIS'S NEW DEMOCRACY PARTY HAS WON 54.6 PERCENT OF THE POPULAR VOTE AND IS EXPECTED TO HAVE 214 OF 300 DEPUTIES; MAVROS'S CENTER UNION/NEW FORCES, 20.4 PERCENT AND 64 DEPUTIES; PAPANDREOU'S PASOK, 13.6 PERCENT AND 12 DEPUTIES; UNITED LEFT, 9 PERCENT AND 10 DEPUTIES.

3. THE REINFORCED PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SYSTEM MAKES KARAMANLIS'S VICTORY IN PARLIAMENT EVEN MORE IMPRESSIVE.

4. FULL IMPLICATIONS OF KARAMANLIS'S VICTORY WILL HAVE TO
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AWAIT FORMATION OF HIS GOVERNMENT, BUT OUR TENTATIVE

JUDGMENTS ARE THAT:

--(A) THE ELECTION WAS, IN EFFECT, A REFERENDUM ON THE LEADERSHIP OF KARAMANLIS. HE HAS, THEREFORE, GAINED A DRAMATIC PERSONAL VICTORY. MANY GREEKS EVIDENTLY SEE HIM, AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT, AS THE ONLY SURE ALTERNATIVE TO MILITARY RULE.

--(B) KARAMANLIS BY TEMPERAMENT FAVORS STRONG TIES WITH THE US. WE EXPECT, HOWEVER, THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WILL EVENTUALLY SEEK TO REVISE THE TERMS OF SEVERAL OF OUR BILATERAL AGREEMENTS TO ELIMINATE LANGUAGE WHICH THE GREEKS GENERALLY CONSIDER DEROGATE FROM GREEK SOVEREIGNTY.

--(C) EQUALLY IMPORTANT FOR US INTERESTS IS THE POOR SHOWING BY THE STRONGLY ANTI-AMERICAN AND ANTI-NATO PAPANDREOU. A STRONGER PASOK SHOWING THAN THAT OF THE CENTER UNION/NEW FORCES, WOULD HAVE STRENGTHENED THE FORCES FOR POLARIZATION BETWEEN THE RIGHT AND LEFT IN PARLIAMENT. THE CENTER UNION/NEW FORCES PARTY WILL, IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, ACT AS A RESPONSIBLE PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION.

--(D) KARAMANLIS ALSO FAVORS STRONG TIES WITH NATO. HE WOULD LIKE TO REVERSE THE PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO MILITARY MECHANISMS WHICH HE FELT OBLIGED TO CARRY OUT IN THE WAKE OF THE CYPRUS CRISIS BUT HE WILL HAVE TO MOVE CAREFULLY NOT TO FURNISH AMMUNITION TO HIS OPPOSITION.

--(C) KARAMANLIS WOULD LIKE TO MINIMIZE DAMAGE TO RELATIONS WITH TURKEY. HIS IMPRESSIVE VICTORY, THEREFORE, SHOULD PLACE HIM IN A GOOD POSITION TO OFFER CONCESSIONS ON THE CYPRUS ISSUE. HE CANNOT BE SEEN, HOWEVER, TO CAPITULATE TO THE TURKS. HE IS NOT LIKELY TO OPPOSE MAKARIOS'S RETURN TO CYPRUS, BUT HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO REASON WITH MAKARIOS NOT TO TAKE A HARD LINE.

--(F) THE GREEK ARMED FORCES ARE PROBABLY HIGHLY SATISFIED WITH KARAMANLIS'S DECISIVE VICTORY. ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY HAVE BEEN CONCERNED OVER KARAMANLIS'S LEGALIZATION OF
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THE COMMUNIST PARTY (BEFORE THE ELECTION) AND OVER THE PURGE OF FORMER JUNTA MEMBERS. THE MILITARY REPORTEDLY DO NOT HAVE AT THIS TIME THE NECESSARY SUPPORTING BASE TO INTERVENE AND APPEAR WILLING TO GIVE KARAMANLIS TIME TO WORK THINGS OUT.

--(G) THE GREEKS WILL VOTE ON DECEMBER 8 ON WHETHER GREECE SHOULD BE A MONARCHY OR A REPUBLIC. THERE ARE

STRONG INDICATIONS THAT THE PEOPLE WILL CHOOSE A REPUBLIC.
IF SO, THE CONSTITUTION WILL HAVE TO BE REVISED BY PARLIA-
MENT. THANKS TO HIS DECISIVE VICTORY, KARAMANLIS NOW HAS
THE VOTES TO BRING ABOUT THE KIND OF CONSTITUTION THAT
PROVIDES FOR THE STRONG PRESIDENCY THAT HE HAS LONG SAID HE
WANTED.

5. EUR CONCURS IN THIS ASSESSMENT. INGERSOLL

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